

# **Iowa SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL**

## **Annual Report 2007 - 2008**



### **VISION STATEMENT**

All children in Iowa, as members of communities, shall receive opportunities and needed supports for meaningful lives and quality education experiences.

(2007)

# **State Board of Education**

State of Iowa  
**Department of Education**  
Grimes State Office Building  
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# **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Iowa Special Education Advisory Panel serves as a resource to advise the Iowa Department of Education on behalf of all children with special needs and their families. This Panel engages in dialogue regarding philosophies and policies, including best practices and special education compliance that result in successful outcomes for persons with disabilities. (2007)

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## **PURPOSE:**

“To provide policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities.”

## **DUTIES:**

- a) Advise state education agency on unmet needs;
- b) Comment publicly on any rules and regulations proposed by the state;
- c) Advise State education agency (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting data to the U.S. Department of Education Secretary under section 618 of the Act;
- d) Advise SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of this Act;
- e) Advise SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services.

34 C.F.R. §300.169 (2006)

## 2007-2008 MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Panel consists of representatives from both public and private sectors who, by virtue of their position, interest, and training, can contribute to the education of children with disabilities. A majority (51%) of the members of the Panel must be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities. The Director of the Department of Education (DE) appoints members of the Advisory Panel.

### Executive Committee:

**Jon Muller** – Chair (Juvenile Corrections)

**Julie Jensen** – Vice-Chair (Local Official-Homeless Assistance Act)

**Lana Michelson** – Bureau Chief (DE Bureau of Student and Family Support Services)

**Eric Neessen** – Panel Facilitator (DE)

### Panel Members:

MEMBER	ROLE
<b>Kyla Alba</b>	Parent of child with a disability Parent Educator Connection
<b>Ruth Allison</b>	Vocational Rehabilitation Services
<b>Erik Anderson</b>	Individual with a disability
<b>Trish Barto</b>	State Child Welfare Agency responsible for Foster Care
<b>Maria Cashman</b>	Area Education Agency Special Education Director
<b>Patrick Clancy</b>	Urban Education Network
<b>Lucy Evans</b>	Parent of child with a disability School administrator
<b>Jennifer Gomez</b>	Parent of child with a disability Private schools
<b>Diana Gonzalez</b>	Board of Regents
<b>Vicki Goshon</b>	Parent of child with a disability Teacher
<b>Paul Greene</b>	Parent of child with a disability
<b>Tyler Greene</b>	Student
<b>Renay Hauswirth</b>	Parent of child with a disability
<b>Chuck Hinz</b>	Post-Secondary/Community Colleges
<b>Jessica Iverson</b>	Teacher – special education
<b>Julie Jensen</b>	Local Official-Homeless Assistance Act Administrator of Programs for Children with Disabilities
<b>Megen Johnson</b>	Department for the Blind

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>ROLE</b>
<b>Michelle Laughlin</b>	Individual with a disability Institute of Higher Education
<b>Robin Malmberg</b>	Adult Correctional Facilities
<b>Susan Myers</b>	PTI (Executive Director)
<b>Jule Reynolds</b>	Parent of child with a disability
<b>W. Ray Richardson</b>	Superintendent - Retired
<b>Beth Rydberg</b>	Protection & Advocacy Parent of child with a disability
<b>LaShell Staley</b>	Parent of child with a disability
<b>Susan Stock</b>	Parent of child with a disability Teacher

**Panel Staff:**

**Sonia Lewis** – Panel Secretary (DE)

**Dennis Dykstra** – Administrative Consultant (DE)

# Annual Priorities

## Priorities:

To help provide guidance related to the State Performance Plan.

To review the State Performance Plan indicators and help set appropriate and ambitious targets, when necessary.

## Key Activities and Accomplishments

**Annual Performance Report** (web link: [www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/623/592](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/623/592))

During the first SEAP meeting in September 2007, Lana Michelson reported on the status of special education in Iowa. The information she presented to the Panel came directly from the APR and SPP indicator data submitted to OSEP on February 1, 2007. Lana explained that the letter she received from OSEP on June 15, 2007, provided an outline of the “determination” system used. The four levels of determination are as follows: Meets Requirements, Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention, or Needs Substantial Intervention. In Iowa, the Part B determination was “Needs Assistance” and Part C determination was “Meets Requirements.” An overview of other states’ determinations revealed the following:

- 9 states/territories = meets requirements
- 41 states/territories = needs assistance
- 9 states/territories = needs intervention

Based on this information, it was decided that the SEAP’s priority for the year would be to address the issues related to our state APR indicators. Throughout the year, consultants from the DE provided updates on data from the previous year as well as updates on current activities being implemented to improve or maintain performance in the indicator areas. Brief summaries of the consultant reports to the panel are provided below.

### **Amy Williamson & Lana Michelson – Indicator B1: Graduation**

Indicator 1 is the percentage of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma compared to all youth in the State graduating with a regular diploma. Although the gap is closing, the target was not met. The data showed that two AEAs met the target.

### **Amy Williamson & Lana Michelson – Indicator B2: Dropout**

Indicator 2 is the percentage of students with IEPs dropping out of high school compared to the percent of all youth in the State dropping out of high school. While the target was not met, the gap is narrowing. The data revealed that only one AEA did not meet the target.

### **Amy Williams & Kathy Hinders – Indicator B3: Participation and Performance**

This indicator measures the percent of students with disabilities participating in the state assessment as well as the percentage of those who are proficient. Three areas are reported for this indicator: a) percent of districts meeting the state objectives (AYP), b) participation rate for

students with disabilities and c) proficiency rate for students with disabilities. The state met the AYP and participation targets but not all targets for proficiency rate were met.

**Suana Wessendorf & Barbara Ohlund** – Indicator B4: Suspension and Expulsion

This indicator looks at the percent of districts identified by the State as having a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year. The data revealed that the state is not meeting its target of 1.50% (currently at 3.01%).

**Amy Williamson** – Indicator B5: Least Restrictive Environment. LRE 6-21 School Aged

a) Number of children with IEPs who are removed from the classroom less than 21% of the time (80% of the time in general education). All AEAs and the state meet the target.

b) Number of children with IEPs removed from the general education classroom less than 60% of the day. Only one AEA did not meet the target.

c) This indicator is the percent of children with IEPs ages 6-21 served in public or private separate schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital placements. OSEP recalculated the Department's 618 table data and came up with different figures because OSEP did not include correctional facilities and the Department did. Amy showed the comparison of the data with and without the correctional facilities data.

**Dee Gethmann** – Indicator B7: Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO)

Early Childhood Outcomes are in both Part C SPP and Part B SPP for 3-5 year olds. ECO is about telling how well and how effective our Early Childhood Special Education services are in enhancing children's skills. Ongoing improvements need to continue.

**Deb Samson** – Indicator B8: Parent Involvement

Survey results show that for kids 3-5 years of age, the parent satisfaction rating is 72.5%. Conversely, for students K-12, the parent satisfaction rating is 61%. While the PEC conducted 1,000 parent surveys in 2007 it is now planning to survey 2,000 parents in 2008.

**Marty Ikeda & Amy Williamson** – Indicator B9: Disproportionate Representation

Disproportionality means that some group or ethnicity is either under or over represented in Special Education. This year there were two AEAs identified as having a disproportionate representation of minority students in special education. Efforts and action steps were explained to the panel.

**Amy Williamson** – Indicator B10: Disproportionality/Disability Category

Per OSEP guidance, we do not have to report on this indicator.

**Eric Neessen** – Indicator B11: 60-day Timeline for Evaluation

This process requires initial evaluations for special education to be completed within 60 calendar days. This indicator requires the state to report on the number of children evaluated, the number determined eligible, the number determined not eligible, and any reasons why any evaluation was not completed within the 60-day time limit. The target is set at 100% by OSEP. None of the AEAs met that goal.



**Judy Knox** – Indicator B12: Effective Transition Part C to B

This indicator requires the state to report the number of children transitioning from Part C to Part B and have done so in a timely manner. Every child that should be in Part B needs to be referred, evaluated, and receive Part B services before their third birthday. The number of children that they determined might be in need of Part B services was 1,335.

**Barb Guy**– Indicator B13 & B14: Secondary Transition

Fifteen percent of all IEPs met Indicator B13 criteria – an increase of 10% from the previous year. There was an increase in three critical elements: Transition Assessments (+16.66%); Course of Study (+11.54%); (Goals +15.54%). The data for 2006-2007 had slight decreases in three critical elements: Preferences and Interests (-1.79%); Postsecondary Expectations (-3.6%); Services and Supports (-4.76%). Indicator B14 (postsecondary outcomes) is a baseline year (first year reporting this data). Data was collected for children with and without IEPs.

**Dee Ann Wilson** – Indicators B16-19: Complaints, Hearings, Resolutions, and Mediations.

Indicator B16: Iowa had five written complaints with one complaint being investigated. The activities conducted this year to support Indicator 16 included six conflict resolution trainings, staff development to ALJs and mediators, training provided to 15 colleges and universities, and ongoing support to AEAs for their resolution facilitators. The state met the 100% target.

Indicator B17: There is a 45 day timeline for hearings. The state met the 100% target. For 2007, the following numbers are applicable:

• Hearing requests total	4
• Resolution sessions	2
• Settlement Agreements	1
• Hearings / Fully Adjudicated	1
• Decisions within timeline	0
• Decisions with extended timeline	1
• Resolved without a hearing	3

Improvement Activities conducted:

- Revised Practices, Policies, & Procedures
- Examine Hearing Decisions
- Added Complaint Option
- Provided 3 additional in-services

Indicator B18

Resolution sessions: Since Iowa had fewer than 10 cases, no report was submitted to OSEP.

Indicator B19

Ninety percent of preappeal conferences and mediations held reached an agreement. The state did not meet the 92% target.

**Amy Williamson** – Indicator B20: Timely and Accurate Data

The state met the 100% target.

## Workshops to the Panel

In order to fulfill their role of advising the DE on special education issues, Panel members felt they needed to stay current on key aspects of the special education system in Iowa. During the year, DE staff involved with specific programs or projects were invited to present to the Panel. Members were frequently asked to provide feedback or make recommendations for specific issues discussed. Following is a brief synopsis of workshops and panel responses during this past year.

### 1) **Bureau Updates with Lana Michelson**

An important item on every agenda included an update on current DE initiatives and activities by Lana Michelson, Bureau Chief for Student and Family Support Services. This feature kept Panel members up-to-date regarding national, state and AEA initiatives and policy changes, trends in special/general education, and legislative concerns. Examples of updates included:

- Summary of Iowa's APR indicators, progress toward goals, and targets
- Sharing information about the new Coordinating Council for Vision Services and how funding would be provided to serve the needs of students with visual impairments in Iowa
- Brief overview of the Recruitment and Retention project designed to help address the SLP shortage in the state
- Personnel openings and hirings within the Department and Bureau of Student and Family Support Services
- Plans to collaborate with Nebraska and Kansas for a regional law conference in the Fall of 2008
- IEP resource tools for teachers and the need to continually increase the quality of IEPs for students
- Updates on efforts by AEAs to meet SPP indicator requirements
- Infrastructure reorganization of the Iowa Department of Education

### 2) **Legal Updates with Thomas Mayes, Bureau Legal Consultant**

Updates included:

- Review of the process for revision of Iowa's Rules for Special Education and approval by the Board of Education in June
- Review of Explanatory Notes and Conversion Table developed to contrast the changes between former state rules and new state rules
- Training of Iowa's Special Education Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) regarding writing decisions on behalf of a district
- Clarification on Iowa's definition for Behavior Disorders
- Review of the current State seclusion and restraint policy and gathering input from the panel
- Review of the Interim Alternative Educational Settings (IAES) document developed for educators

- Current developments regarding due process hearings, settlements, and court cases
- Seclusion and Restraint updates that apply to all students, not just those students with IEPs
- Non-publics are now defined as accredited
- Proposed rule making updates from the Federal government pertaining to parents withdrawing consent for an evaluation, non-attorney advocates in due process hearings, and providing special education dollars to districts with no special education students (in case a child with special needs moves in)

### 3) **Special Education Funding Update with Dennis Dykstra**

School Budget Review Committee (SBRC) is a mandated committee in Iowa Code. The SBRC reviews the Special Education instructional dollars from year-to-year and examines the financial health of a district. The DE is mandated by code to give SBRC a report regarding special education instructional dollars.

Each AEA Director of Special Education assigns certain leveled weights (Levels 1, 2, or 3) for funding purposes to every child receiving special education services. From 2006 to 2007, the number of children weighted as Level 1 and Level 3 decreased while the number of students weighted as Level 2 increased. Of the ten AEAs, three of the AEAs average weightedness went down from the previous year. Those three AEAs had the highest average weightedness from the previous year. The other seven AEAs increased their average weightedness from the previous year. One AEA had an increase in both their head count and weights. One of the possible reasons for this change in “weightedness” was the introduction of the new Weighted Enrollment Matrix that each AEA started using in the Fall of 2007.

### 4) **Web IEP with Sharon Hawthorne**

Sharon presented the Web IEP training DVD. Copies were distributed to the members in attendance. The AEAs are responsible for distributing this resource to the teachers in their district. AEAs can duplicate the video as long as they provide acknowledgement of the original source.

### 5) **Instructional Decision Making with Lana Michelson**

Lana described the history of Instructional Decision Making (IDM) in the state and how it is to be used as a process to make good instructional decisions for each child based on sound assessment data. She summarized IDM by saying this is about good instruction and what good instruction should look like from a teacher’s perspective. Classroom teachers should have a good strong core curriculum from which to provide good instruction. In addition, teachers should be gathering data on a regular basis to see if children are progressing, if they need additional support, or if they are ready to move on.

### 6) **RTI Summit with Eric Neessen**

Eric Neessen, Susan Myers, and Marty Ikeda went to the Response to Intervention (RTI) National Summit in Washington DC in December 2007. It was a two-day conference with over 650 people attending representing every state. The focus was on how RTI can be used within general education to support all children, while at the same time using data collected through RTI to provide information regarding children that may need to be evaluated for special education.

- 7) **Goals and Vision for PK – 12 with Kevin Fangman** (Division Administrator for PK-12)  
Kevin spoke about the division goals and vision. He stated that the division is currently working on the Iowa Core Curriculum in the areas of literacy, math, science, social studies, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

8) **Transition Assessment Web Tool with Eric Neessen**

Eric presented on the Transition Assessment web tool that was developed by a state committee over the course of the previous year. The web tool provides teachers, students and parents with information on determining the living, learning, and working needs of students who are 14 years of age and older. The Transition Assessment is an ongoing, coordinated, systematic process that:

- Collects/gathers relevant (appropriate) information/data on a student's interests, preferences, strengths and needs as they relate to the student's postsecondary expectations for living, learning, and working;
- Begins at least by the year the student turns 14 years of age and continues until the student graduates or ages out;
- Provides data from which to plan and make decisions that assist the student to move to postsecondary activities of living, learning, and working;
- Involves input from student, family, school personnel, and other relevant stakeholders such as adult agencies and related services personnel (the IEP team).

9) **AEA Data Profiles with Amy Williamson**

Amy provided a summary of the SPP and APR indicators submitted to OSEP. The Panel was reminded of which indicators are compliance (federally set) and which ones are performance (state set). The members met in small groups to discuss the data and provide recommendations to the DE for establishing determination criteria. Amy also provided the Panel with an update of the data reflecting the districts who have been identified as having significant disproportionality issues in the areas of identification, placement, and discipline. The Panel learned that many improvements have been made across the state, yet there are still 18 districts who have been identified in one or more areas of identification, placement, and discipline.

10) **2008 Legislative Review with Jeff Berger**

Jeff provided an overview of the legislative bills that impacted education over the past year's session. Some of the topics covered pertained to: mandatory eye screening for any student prior to any action related to special education; establishment of Council on Homelessness; establishment of statewide Autism Council; funding reduction to the AEAs; teacher quality; funding for professional development; changes in Medicaid reimbursement flow structure at the AEA and DE level; Iowa Core Curriculum development and understanding standards and benchmarks; non-publics are now defined as "accredited"; 75 million dollars for teacher pay; preschool funding; senior year plus; funding for Empowerment; community college funds for AEA compliance.

#### **11) Data Warehouse with Jim Addy**

Jim introduced the new data warehouse to be used at the DE. This warehouse will merge data sources from Project EASIER, ITBS/ITED, and IMS. This new system will be called EdInsight. This system will:

- a. Provide the education community a single repository of combined data from multiple sources on one common system.
- b. Provide tools and training in the use of data for benchmarking and longitudinal and comparative analysis.
- c. Empower data driven decision making for education stakeholders.
- d. Increase confidence in data by defining and implementing processes to improve data consistency, reliability and quality.

## **Related Activities**

This section outlines ongoing professional development opportunities for Panel members in topics related to special education and the work members are asked to do as part of their duties.

### **Conference/Workshop Attendance**

Panel members were invited to attend conferences and workshops held in Iowa that offered opportunities for them to learn about specific topics and areas related to special education. Expenses for travel, lodging and registrations were reimbursed. The conferences/workshops included the following:

- Council for Exceptional Children in Des Moines – Oct. 2007
- I-CASE in Des Moines – Oct. 2007
- Law Conference in Ames – Oct. 2007
- OSEP Leadership Conference in Washington, DC – June 2007
  - SEAP Chair (Jon Muller) and Vice Chair (Julie Jensen) attended with Lana Michelson and Dennis Dykstra
- Parent Education Connection Conference in Ames – Feb. 2008
- Second Annual High School Summit at the Polk County Convention Center – Dec. 2007

Members attending the conferences shared their experiences and highlighted lessons learned during the regular Panel meetings.

### **SEAP Subcommittees**

The Panel convened one subcommittee:

- Annual Report – this group reviewed, suggested improvements, and drafted the 2007-2008 Annual Report for the Panel's approval.

### **Special Awards**

Panel member Tyler Greene received the CEC national “Yes, I Can” award for self-advocacy from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). He was one of 29 recipients honored at the national CEC conference in Boston, MA, in April 2008. His video, “I’m Tyler,” has been distributed nationally and internationally.

Panel member Vicki Goshon received the “Sam Kirk Educator of the Year” award from the Learning Disabilities Association. She was honored at the international conference in Chicago.

**2007- 2008 Meeting Dates**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>September 27, 2007</b>	12:30pm – 7:00pm	Foxboro Conf. Center – Johnston, IA
<b>September 28, 2007</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA
<b>November 2, 2007</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA
<b>December 7, 2007</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA
<b>January 25, 2008</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA
<b>April 25, 2008</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA
<b>June 6, 2008</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA

**2008 - 2009 Scheduled Meeting Dates**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>September 25, 2008</b>	12:30pm – 7:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA
<b>September 26, 2008</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA
<b>October 31, 2008</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA
<b>December 5, 2008</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA
<b>January 23, 2009</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA
<b>April 24, 2009</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA
<b>June 5, 2009</b>	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn – Johnston, IA

# Acronyms/Terms

**AEA** – Area Education Agency

**ALJ** - Administrative Law Judge

**APR** – Annual Performance Report

**AYP** – Adequate Yearly Progress

**I-CASE-** Iowa Council for Administrators of Special Education

**DE** – Iowa Department of Education

**District** – school district (also referred to as Local Educational Agency or LEA)

**HQT** – Highly Qualified Teacher

**IDEA, IDEA '04 or IDEA 2004** – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004

**IDM** – Instructional Decision Making

**IMS** – Information Management System

**ITBS/ITED** – Iowa Test of Basic Skills / Iowa Test of Educational Development

**IEP** – Individualized Education Program

**LEA** – Local Educational Agency (also called school districts)

**NCLB** – No Child Left Behind, a federal education law

**OSEP** – Office of Special Education Programs (Washington, D.C.)

**Panel** – Special Education Advisory Panel (also referred to as “SEAP”)

**Part B** – Special Education Services for Children with Disabilities Ages 3 to 21

**Part C** - Services for Children Birth through Two Years

**SEA** – State Education Agency

**SEAP** – Special Education Advisory Panel (also referred to as the “Panel”)

**SLP** – Speech and Language Pathologist

**SPP** – State Performance Plan (sometimes called the “Six-Year Performance Plan”)



## SPP/APR Part B Indicators

- Indicator 1** — Improving graduation rates for students with disabilities
- Indicator 2** — Decreasing dropout rates for students with disabilities
- Indicator 3** — Ensuring all students with disabilities participate in statewide or alternate assessments
- Indicator 4** — Reducing suspension and expulsion rates for students with disabilities
- Indicator 5** — Providing services for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment
- Indicator 6** — Providing preschool children with disabilities services in the least restrictive environment
- Indicator 7** — Improving cognitive and social outcomes for preschool children with disabilities
- Indicator 8** — Improving parent involvement in their child's special education program
- Indicator 9** — Reducing disproportionality of cultural groups in special education
- Indicator 10** — Reducing the number of students from other cultures in certain disability categories
- Indicator 11** — Ensuring evaluations are completed within 60 calendar days
- Indicator 12** — Ensuring a smoother transition from preschool programs to school-based programs
- Indicator 13** — Improving transition services for students with disabilities at the secondary level, beginning at age 14
- Indicator 14** — Improving the outcomes for students moving from secondary to postsecondary activities
- Indicator 15** — Making sure school districts correct noncompliance areas in their special education program within one year
- Indicator 16** — Ensuring complaints filed by parents and other agencies are completed in a 60-day period
- Indicator 17** — Ensuring due process hearings are completed in a 45-day period
- Indicator 18** — Increasing the use of resolution sessions to resolve due process hearings
- Indicator 19** — Increasing the use of mediation to resolve differences with the school
- Indicator 20** — Making sure the data used by the State is timely and accurate

(Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, 2007)

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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